

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 438
By Gilbert

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Marvin Runyon for his meritorious service as Postmaster General of the United States.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the elected representatives of the state of Tennessee should pause to pay tribute to those exemplary citizens who have given unselfishly of themselves, their time and their talents to perpetuate the public good; and

WHEREAS, Marvin Runyon, Postmaster General of the United States, is one such laudable public servant; after six remarkable years at the helm of one of the nation's largest federal agencies, this Tennessean will step down from his post this coming spring; and

WHEREAS, under Marvin Runyon's expert guidance, the U.S. Postal Service gained efficiencies and economies of scale the agency has never before seen; Mr. Runyon supervised the management restructuring, production and service improvements, and financial gains that revitalized this ailing \$50 billion federal agency; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure, the U.S. Postal Service's longtime cycle of losing money every three years was broken; instead, the Postal Service recorded record profits for three consecutive years, earning \$1.7 billion in 1995, \$1.5 billion in 1996, and \$1.2 billion in 1997; and

WHEREAS, although renowned for his cost-cutting initiatives, Mr. Runyon always placed the needs of Postal Service customers above all else; average mail delivery time and accuracy greatly increased – from 72 percent on-time performance when he arrived to 92 percent today – and only one general postage rate increase was imposed during his tenure; and

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WHEREAS, in addition, Marvin Runyon has well positioned the Postal Service to successfully fend-off attacks by competitors and special interest groups who threaten to destroy “a vital American tradition” and has helped to preserve the historic legacy of universal mail service; and

WHEREAS, when Mr. Runyon took over the troubled Tennessee Valley Authority in 1987, none of TVA’s nuclear plants were operational. Contractors were managing the plants and the agency was in a pattern of frequent and large rate hikes. After he came on board, he reduced the agency’s workforce by 11,000, reorganized management, instituted a rate freeze that began in 1988 and continued five years past his departure, and he employed managers who restarted two nuclear units in 1988 and another in 1991; and

WHEREAS, his successes at the U.S. Postal Service mirrored much of what he achieved at TVA; and

WHEREAS, after he achieved cumulative savings and efficiency improvements of \$1.8 billion at TVA, observers hailed Marvin Runyon for creating “one of the most effective of federal agencies” – an accolade befitting his tenure with the Postal Service as well as his career with TVA; and

WHEREAS, prior to his exemplary tenures with TVA and the U.S. Postal Service, Marvin Runyon expertly served as president and chief executive officer for Nissan Motor Manufacturing Corporation in Smyrna, Tennessee – the first motor vehicle production plant established in this country by the highly-regarded Japanese automaker; and

WHEREAS, Nissan executives lured Runyon away from Ford Motor Company where he had excelled during a distinguished 37-year career, he left Ford in 1980 with the rank of vice president of Body and Assembly Operations;

WHEREAS, reflecting upon Mr. Runyon’s career with the company, a senior Ford executive told the Economic Club of Detroit in late 1992: “Runyon’s strength was that he understood processes and people. He developed a reputation as a straight-shooting, results-

oriented manager who never took his eye off his quality objectives or the needs of his employees”; and

WHEREAS, always one to shoulder the mantle of professional responsibility, Mr. Runyon is a member of the Society of International Business Fellows, the Economic Club of Washington, the electric utilities’ Nuclear Power Oversight Committee, and is a board member for the Electric Power Research Institute; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Runyon is a United States Army Air Corps veteran and a graduate of Texas A&M University; and

WHEREAS, although a Texas native, Mr. Runyon is truly a son of Tennessee as he has contributed greatly to the success of our great state; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Runyon was selected to Leadership Nashville, Leadership Knoxville, and Leadership Memphis and has served on the Chamber of Commerce boards in each of the three cities; he has served on the United Way boards in Nashville and Knoxville and served as a board member of the Memphis in May International Festival, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Runyon has also served on the Tennessee Economic Partnership’s Senior Partner Board and devoted himself to the chairmanship of the Mid-South Minority Purchasing Council’s Minority Market Place trade fair for three years; as chairman of this trade fair, Marvin Runyon helped to expand the Nashville-based event into the largest minority business event of its kind in the nation; and

WHEREAS, in spite of the demands on his time, Mr. Runyon has also served as a board member of the Metropolitan Nashville Public Education Foundation, the Tennessee Technology Foundation, the Southeast US/Japan Association, Knoxville’s Downtown Organization, the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and United Way of Middle Tennessee; Texas A&M University is fortunate to have this distinguished alumnus serve on their Nucleus Fund Committee and International Programs Resource Development Committee; and

WHEREAS, Marvin Runyon has been the recipient of numerous prestigious awards and honors of which even a brief list is inspiring: the National Management Association’s Bold

Knight of Management Award, the NCCJ Nashville Chapter Human Relations Award, the Minority Business Development Agency's Special Recognition Award, the Tennessee-Japan Friends in Commerce Crystal Award, and the Automotive Hall of Fame's distinguished Service Citation award; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Runyon has also been named "Newsmaker of the Year" by *The Knoxville Journal*, Nashville's *Advantage* magazine's "CEO of the Year," and "Manager of the Year" by the Nashville Chapter of the National Management Association; and

WHEREAS, his many honors and accolades aside, Mr. Runyon is most appreciative of the love and support he shares with his wife, Sue Atkinson, who is the very epitome of a dedicated professional and fine public servant herself; and

WHEREAS, Marvin Runyon has performed his many essential duties with extraordinary dedication and unprecedented devotion; throughout his outstanding tenures with the U.S. Postal Service, TVA, Nissan and Ford he has exemplified the spirit and dedication that is characteristic of a great Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Runyon is the perfect example of a person totally committed to the highest ideals of public service and it is appropriate that upon his well-deserved retirement from the U.S. Postal Service, he should be recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we hereby honor Marvin Runyon, Postmaster General of the United States, upon six years of meritorious service to our largest federal agency. We thank him for his years of public service and the recognition he has brought to our state, celebrate his many achievements, and wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.